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MEDIA PREDICTIONS IN OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM

A Thesis presented to the faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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by

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B.S., University of Colorado at Colorado Springs, 1978

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1992

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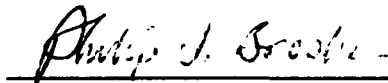
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The opinions and conclusions expressed herein are those of the student author and do not necessarily represent the views of the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College or any other governmental agency. (Reference to this study should include the foregoing statement).

## ABSTRACT

**MEDIA PREDICTIONS IN OPERATIONS DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM** by MAJ Michael G. Monnett, USA, 91 pages.

This thesis examines predictions journalists made during the Gulf War, to include whether or not force would be used, and, if so, how. Predictions that might have caused security violations were examined, as was the military's use of the media to further deception plans. Content Analysis was also used to determine whether or not sociological trends could be vectored using an analytical approach.

In an age of continuing friction between the military and the media, this study takes a unique approach in looking at a different aspect of the relationship; how, in retrospect reporters may have helped or hurt the effort through predictions they made. Content analysis in this study worked. Trends toward the actual events that occurred were evident for the breakdown of diplomacy, the conduct of an air campaign, and a ground assault. The technique might prove to be useful for application to find trends in ongoing events.

The study concludes that journalists as a group correctly predicted events. I found one article that could have posed security problems for U.S. and coalition forces, but numerous articles supporting the deception story existed.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

Rather than focus on current or ongoing issues between the military and the media or what the media may or may not have reported during Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm (ODS), this thesis examines predictions that the media made during ODS. The primary focus will be on the type, frequency, and accuracy of those predictions. To the best of my knowledge after research, this is a unique paper in two respects.

First, although historians do a good job of looking back and examining history, that process usually does not extend to casual news and information that deluges us daily. As the Gulf War unfolded, those of us caught up in the story the media presented followed the news very carefully. Foremost in our thoughts, it shaped our opinions, was the base information for our discussions, and the cause of many of our concerns. Who can forget newsmen diving off camera, trying to put on protective masks, or diagrams showing the defensive positions our soldiers would have to breach?

Rarely, though, does any of us travel back in time and look, with hindsight, at the information we received. This thesis does just that.

in a very narrowly defined way. In looking at the predictions journalists made, and knowing the outcome, it is possible to gain a small understanding of the influence news has over us.

Second, a methodology is proposed, purporting that word frequency can be used in a predictive way. Discussion of this analytical approach to a sociological problem is discussed more in Chapter 3, with the results displayed in Chapter 6.

### RESEARCH QUESTION

There is a growing concern within the U.S. military that media coverage of deployments and events could compromise future operations. The media, who frequently consider themselves to be the "watchdog of the government," are concerned that they do not get accurate information rapidly and that the military prevents them from performing their role as they interpret the First Amendment. Therefore, the media frequently want to publish information that the military needs to suppress. These diametrically opposed interests have resulted in much discussion, some compromise, and, obviously, some friction and animosity.

That confrontation generally sums up the negative aspects of the relationship between the military and the media. On a similar vein, however, is the media's propensity to take known facts, look ahead, and make predictions as to what may happen in the future. Maj. Gen. Perry Smith, in How CNN Fought the War, states that viewers were actually upset that CNN initially provided so little analysis of the war. In

reviewing news, it becomes clear that predictions are normal conclusions to analysis. Beyond "straight news," it may be supposed that, given no leaks and very little operational information, media would turn to predictive journalism to provide the public something more than minimal information. For most events, predictive journalism poses no particular problems. Although predictions do not guarantee accuracy, if they come too close to the truth in military operations, the results could be every bit as harmful as a breach of security.

The obverse, that the military can deceive an enemy and gain an advantage by similarly deceiving the media, is equally true. World War II provides an excellent example, from an operation that was planned but never took place. Called Pastel Two, it was the deception plan for the U.S. invasion of Japan.

In addition to intricate plans designed to fool the Japanese as to where the invasion would take place, Pastel Two included stories to be fed to the media that would add legitimacy to the deception. For example, although airborne assaults would not take place, news releases "...were to describe increases in the reconstitution of airborne units and 'many gliders passing through west coast ports.'"<sup>1</sup>

This thesis will discuss that issue within the context of Operations Desert Shield/Desert Storm. Specifically, did the media predict, with any accuracy, U.S. operational plans and, if so, to what

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<sup>1</sup>Thomas M. Huber, Pastel: Deception in the Invasion of Japan (Combat Studies Institute, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1988): 10.

degree of accuracy regarding place, time, and composition? Secondly, what were the sources of information they used to base their predictions on? What information was available to the media, both historically and as the Gulf War unfolded, that would influence any predictions they might make? How accurate were the media in predicting that a war would take place, or when it would happen? Once the air war started, what were the predictions as to whether or not a ground war would start, and if so, how and when it would be fought, and how long it would last? Finally, was there evidence that allied forces "used" the media to further their deception plan?

#### BACKGROUND.

##### POLITICAL EVOLUTION

On August 2, 1990, under the guise of an age-old border dispute, Iraq invaded Kuwait. Their motives for the aggression were ostensibly for obtaining Kuwaiti oil fields and launching what we believed to be the initial stages of Saddam Hussein's campaign for a united Arab world, under his leadership. Beyond Kuwait's now precarious position, the strong possibility existed that an invasion of Saudi Arabia would soon follow. The Iraqis had invaded with over 100,000 soldiers; "well beyond what was needed."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Bob Woodward, The Commanders (Simon and Schuster, 1991), 225.

The United States, in its role as world peace keeper and with vital national interests in Southwest Asia threatened, could not hope to ignore Iraqi aggression. The U.S. is tied economically to the area, not only for oil, but with large investments both in banking and commerce. Geographically, Kuwait is a key country for Iraq's access through the Persian Gulf into the Indian Ocean.

Political considerations were probably the most critical, however. Southwest Asia, as a unified pan-Arab nation, could directly threaten European stability and our interests there. That, coupled with our expressed national objective of assisting democracies when threatened, virtually guaranteed U.S. involvement of some kind.

Israel was also of some importance in terms of regional stability. A united Arab region would pose a direct threat to their Jewish neighbors and force the Palestinian issue into a probable confrontation. With the close U.S.-Israeli ties and the aforementioned issues, the President early on discounted an option of taking no action.

Our initial options appeared limited; immediate air strikes or naval action might precipitate further Iraqi attacks into Saudi Arabia, which seemed extremely vulnerable at the time. The time we needed to build up a credible deterrent force in the region might be excessive, and vulnerable to premature attack. Iraq reputedly had a large, modern army, with chemical and biological capability — more reason for caution. There was also a CIA report of July 20 that indicated 30,000 Iraqi soldiers massing on Kuwait's border. In a meeting July 21 the National Security Council selected U.S. courses of action: naval and air

demonstrations in the region, with a prepared contingency plan for more force if required.<sup>3</sup>

Thus, when Iraq did occupy Kuwait, U.S. response was fairly immediate. President Bush imposed an embargo on Iraq, calling for United Nations members to cease all shipping and trade with that country. Simultaneously with the United Nations adoption of Resolution 660, "condemning the invasion" and demanding Iraq's "immediate and unconditional withdrawal from Kuwait," the United Kingdom, France, and Switzerland also froze all Iraqi and Kuwait assets. Additionally, in a move that perhaps smoothed the way for more dramatic U.S. action later, the USSR voted for Resolution 660 and stopped delivery of military equipment to Iraq.<sup>4</sup>

While Iraq flexed its muscle and cautioned other countries not to intervene, Kuwaiti resistance continued, and President Bush warned Iraq not to continue the invasion south into Saudi Arabia. When the U.S. offered to send defensive forces to help protect the Saudis, Iraq announced that they would begin withdrawing their troops from Kuwait on 5 August. As it turned out, intelligence collection learned that Iraq was reinforcing their troops; not removing them. UN Resolution 661, a complete trade embargo, followed. King Fahd of Saudi Arabia requested U.S. military assistance, Hussein declared that the occupation was

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<sup>3</sup>James Blackwell, Thunder In The Desert (Bantam Books, October 1991), 87.

<sup>4</sup>"Tracking the Storm: Chronology," Military Review (September 1991): 65.

permanent, and the U.S. began force deployments to the region. Maritime prepositioning ships and naval forces went underway, and the first forces to arrive on the ground in theater, the 82d Airborne Division and 1st Tactical Fighter Wing, deployed on August 7.<sup>5</sup>

The remainder of the month was replete with diplomatic maneuvering and additional deployments, to include the first reserve call-up. The 38th Civil Reserve Air Fleet was brought on active duty to assist in troop deployments. Subsequent guard and reserve notices energized the country in two ways. By the time deployments were complete, virtually every town and city in America had an intense interest in the proceedings — much more so than if only active units had been used.

Secondly was the media handling of the buildup. It is quite possible that, due to the strong American support of their families and loved ones, many reporters provided more human interest and patriotic flavor to their stories than otherwise might have occurred. While that concept may seem to be pure speculation, those of us who became "news junkies" during the crisis can attest to a strong patriotic flavor in most of the news we read and saw.

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<sup>5</sup>Norman Friedman, Desert Victory: The War for Kuwait (Naval Institute Press, Annapolis, MD (1991), 66.



## OPERATIONAL BACKGROUND

U.S. warships fired the first shots on the 18th; warnings across the bows of Iraqi oilers in the Gulf of Oman and Persian Gulf. By late August a billion pounds of U.S. equipment and material were either in Saudi Arabia or on the way.<sup>6</sup> Embassies closed throughout the theater and the U.S. expelled Iraqi diplomats. World attention focused more narrowly on events in the Gulf, and the public watched, wondering whether there would be a war.

Generally speaking, before August 2 most Westerners believed Iraq would not attack anyone, let alone occupy Kuwait.<sup>7</sup> This assessment was based on Iraq's long war with Iran; a nation that battle-weary would certainly not choose to start another war. That belief was reinforced by Ambassador to Iraq April Glaspie's meetings with Hussein, who as late as July 25 assured her there would be no use of military force against Kuwait.<sup>8</sup> Equally ridiculous to some was President Bush's statement that Iraq was close to having a nuclear capability, presumably because Iraq was thought to be technologically backward.<sup>9</sup>

Hussein made many public statements about the numbers and capabilities of his weapons after the Iran-Iraq war, however, and Iraq

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<sup>6</sup>Blackwell, Thunder In The Desert, 100.

<sup>7</sup>Friedman, Desert Victory, 30.

<sup>8</sup>Blackwell, Thunder in the Desert, 69.

<sup>9</sup>Friedman, Desert Victory, 44.

was thought to have a powerful arsenal at its disposal. While some of this information was later disproved, the fact remains that through the end of 1990 it was difficult for anyone, especially the media, to assess accurately Iraq's true wartime capabilities. We knew that they had a strong chemical warfare ability (at least numerically), and had in fact used chemicals against both Iranians and the Kurds. Iraq had also purchased technologically advanced weapons systems, to include laser guided bombs and missiles, and advanced jet aircraft.<sup>10</sup>

Once Iraq did invade Kuwait, the battle-weary concept was discarded for the idea that Iraq, after its war with Iran, was battle-hardened. Touted as the world's fourth largest army, we saw Iraq as strong, aggressive, and a formidable foe. Late in their war with Iran, the Iraqi Army conducted a frontal assault against well prepared Iranian defensive positions. Besides overwhelming their enemy, they impressed the rest of the world with "a level of tactical and operational proficiency equal to that of the best Western armies."<sup>11</sup> The common perception was reinforced; Iraq was strong, well trained, and a dangerous belligerent.

As coalition forces massed on the border, Hussein surprised many reporters when Iraq didn't immediately attack.<sup>12</sup> The time it would take to get a large enough force deployed to eject Iraq from Kuwait also

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<sup>10</sup> Blackwell, Thunder in the Desert, 36.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>12</sup> Friedman, Desert Victory, 106.

would allow Iraq to entrench their forces, making them even more dangerous. Their construction of defensive positions along the Kuwait-Saudi Arabia border beginning in September, coupled with stockpiling of ammunition and food, caused great consternation within the United Nations and doubts whether an embargo would be effective.<sup>13</sup> By October the President, at least, thought that sanctions would not work and that "an offensive military option would have to be created" to either "persuade" or "force" Hussein to leave Kuwait.<sup>14</sup>

That conclusion became more apparent when, by November, Iraq had over 430,000 soldiers and 4,000 tanks in Kuwait.<sup>15</sup> The United Nations, United States, and then Union of Soviet Socialist Republics attempted a series of last minute negotiations. The Air Campaign began January 17, 1991, after the U.S. gave the Soviets time to complete their negotiations and final warnings for Hussein to leave Kuwait had failed.

With perhaps some exceptions in the Iraqi government, no one is certain why Hussein did not choose to attack before then, when his army was numerically superior and could have gained at least a short-term victory. No one is sure why he did not use his large air force to better effect, or why so many Iraqi jets flew to Iran. Guesses ranged from a leader who had what he wanted, to a man more interested in defending what he had taken than pressing forward in an offensive drive.

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<sup>13</sup>Blackwell, Thunder in the Desert, 102.

<sup>14</sup>Ibid., 106.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid., 107.

Another possibility was a Muslim leader in an Arab world who knew when to stop while he was ahead.

In any case, whatever his reasoning, Hussein dug in and let the U.S. mass its forces. Indeed, forces from around the world marshaled to the region, and when the UN deadline passed, began the offensive campaign. Hussein, during the entire war, postured offensively (the "mother of all battles" comes to mind), but did not act in accordance with his rhetoric. Kaffi, his only real offensive operation, ended in a dismal failure.

Certainly his command and control had been severely curtailed during coalition air strikes, and perhaps he underestimated U.S. resolve, but the campaign was a decidedly one-sided event. The ground war, a 100-hour turkey shoot, was over by 28 February. The intent of this thesis is not to analyze the reasons for Iraq's loss or allied victory, but the background helps us understand the perceptions and "information" news forecasts were "filtered" through.

Vietnam, and the way it shaped U.S. journalism, is also worthy of consideration. Without digressing into a discussion of that era, it is worth considering the attitude many Americans had toward the military prior to the Gulf War. A feeling existed that the U.S. forces weren't top notch, and that our technology would fail us in the desert sand. That perception, coupled with Iraq's presumed strengths, makes accurate predictions even more noteworthy.

As analysis will show, there was a wide range of articles predicting how long a ground campaign would last, but early reports of

tens of thousands of body bags being shipped to theater were a telling example of the duration and devastation that the military, at least, thought possible. Given the information available to them, journalists who made even the most dismal predictions might be forgiven.

It will become important during analysis of predictions that Hussein, and probably many others, were convinced that the air campaign would last perhaps two weeks, and that a ground campaign would begin with a Marine amphibious assault into Kuwait City.<sup>16</sup> The air campaign the coalition conducted, however, was unprecedented in history, for duration and ordnance dropped. Although initially planned to last thirty days, it actually lasted thirty-eight, due to poor weather and the "diversion of air assets" to fix the scud problem.<sup>17</sup> An amphibious assault was part of CENTCOM's deception story, and Gen. Schwarzkopf apparently took great pains to foster that belief.

Those events will be the foundation for examining media predictions in the fall and early winter of 1990. U.S. media, undeniably some of the world's most aggressive information seekers, began more and more to speculate on the level of U.S. commitment and involvement that was to come. Many analysts and columnists believed that economic sanctions would work. Others predicted that Iraq would come to her senses and voluntarily leave Kuwait. Still others began a range of predictions that varied from immediate US strikes to a long-term war

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<sup>16</sup>Ibid., 154.

<sup>17</sup>Perry Smith, How CNN Fought the War, 56.

with Iraq. Once the air campaign started Iraq did not behave in any rational military fashion. Except for their defensive line, in most cases, what they could or should have done to protect their conquest, they did not do. Iraq may have the dubious distinction of committing the first act of global-scale ecological terrorism, when they dumped millions of gallons of oil into the Gulf. Who could have foreseen such alternatively weak or diabolical action on Iraq's part, or such decisive action from coalition forces?

It is these predictions, and those that both preceded and followed throughout both Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, that this thesis will address. In dealing with those predictions, it is not only important to understand the limited information the media was working with, but also to establish their motivation for reporting news or speculating on future events.

#### JOURNALISTIC CONSIDERATIONS

Understanding that the public does yearn for news, the media must provide information in a competitive environment that will satisfy its viewers' needs. Simply reporting facts and events as they occur is not sufficient to meet those criteria. Richard Halloran, using the optimist's "half full" versus the pessimist's "half-empty" theory of a bottle, noted that "increasingly, the role of journalism in America is not merely to describe what's in the bottle, but to explain why and how it got that way and what it means to the community or the republic."<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>18</sup>Newsman and National Defense, 46.

In the Gulf War, the media needed to guess, or speculate on possible outcomes, to satisfy our natural curiosity and questions. Much as we try to predict the outcome of a football game before it starts, we try to follow world events to their natural conclusion as they happen. The fairly recent addition of "expert analysts" to the news hour lends credence to this supposition. The sole function of these "experts" is the analysis of the current situation and prediction of future actions and outcomes. The problem in our case, though, is that soldiers are not dealing with a sports event, but life-and-death situations.

Technology today allows instant transmission of news into our living rooms from virtually anywhere on earth. Sometimes, instantaneous news can be an asset. During the air campaign, one of Central Command's best sources of bomb damage assessment in Baghdad was CNN News, and Patriot missile crews used CNN scud launch reports to validate their radar reporting.<sup>19</sup> Instant news also can be extremely dangerous; the more so when the enemy also has access to that news, as Hussein did. Given the nature of military operations, leaders need time to effectively plan a campaign. That plan, once formulated, is followed by an action, either offensive or defensive. In keeping with the Army's principles of war, secrecy is a key ingredient for success in all phases. The enemy's access to any facts, in any phase, is alarming. Add to that the fact that if given sufficient information, the media are

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<sup>19</sup>Blackwell, Thunder in the Desert, 129, 141.

capable of predicting with great accuracy what forces might do, and the situation becomes explosive.

Thus, we have our arena of conflict. The military denies information the media feel they should have. The press's very real capacity for doing harm to future or ongoing operations requires restraint. That friction has been the focus of numerous and ongoing discussions between the military and the press to find an equitable solution for both parties.

The Sidle panel's recommendation in the mid-1980s to form press pools was part of that solution. Pools were first used in Grenada during operation Urgent Fury, with mostly positive, but mixed reviews. During Operation Just Cause in Panama things did not go as well. Washington formed a national pool rather than use journalists already in Panama, and the pool arrived only to find that they had missed most of the action.

By September 1990 during Operation Desert Shield there were already 450 journalists in the gulf area. Once the air war started those restricted to Riyadh had little information to report other than what had taken place at the daily briefings and the scud attacks.<sup>20</sup> Other journalists, with deployed units, had more human interest stories at hand, but not much more concrete information. The CNN reporters still in Baghdad could report what they saw or were told there, but, if possible, were privy to even less operational information than their

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<sup>20</sup>Friedman, Desert Victory, 192.



brethren in Saudi Arabia. The remaining journalists, reporting from the Pentagon or news bureaus in the United States, were told very little. Although "micro-management" in Vietnam from Washington resulted in many communication leaks, for the Gulf War President Bush did not permit the national military structure to control operations. Thus, "the war could be conducted virtually without the leakage generally associated with Washington."<sup>21</sup>

Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, CENTCOM commander, and his superiors, were determined that no information that could be harmful to U.S. or coalition forces be broadcast. Pete Williams, in establishing the press pool, enacted relatively strict guidelines for access to information. Gen. Colin Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, addressed the media on August 8, asking "for some restraint," on their part as they gained information. He asked that they "always measure it against the need for operational security to protect our troops."<sup>22</sup> As in both previous attempts to form press pools, handling of the press, both pool and others, received a mixed review. Many felt that the military was justified in their tight security and censure, while others felt manipulated and unduly constrained.

If assumptions earlier outlining media interests and requirements are true, reporters covering ODS basically had three priorities. The first would be to get and report as much information as possible on

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<sup>21</sup>Ibid., 44.

<sup>22</sup>Woodward, The Commanders, 277-278.

events as they happened throughout the theater. The second, because such information was so limited, would be to speculate on what *might* be happening, though they may not be sure. Again, to satisfy public demand and gain a competitive edge, the third priority would be to analyze events and predict what might occur as a result.

To sum, then, this background looked at the general outline of events leading up to U.S. involvement in the Gulf, and what we generally believed to be true about Iraq, its Army, and its leader. I have attempted to sketch briefly the relationship the media has with the military, the media's motivations, and why they might be inclined to go beyond simple reporting to what I have called predictive journalism. It is this background that will serve as the reference point for analysis of media predictions.

#### ASSUMPTIONS

Unless there is evidence to the contrary, I will assume that the media did not print or broadcast information that they knew to be deceptive to assist command authorities. I will also assume that no medium or reporter was privy to secret information by way of subversion or espionage. Intentional leaks dealing with plans and operations will be difficult to discern. Unless a reporter used the term "unidentified sources" or something comparable, there would be virtually no way to learn whether a prediction was made with or without foreknowledge. Therefore, all predictions will be reviewed carefully for any indication

of concrete knowledge. If it is not discernible, I will not assume any, primarily to avoid "reading too much" into an article.

This assumption deals only with printed or broadcast information used in research for this thesis, as there is evidence that journalists did have some concrete operational information. As examples, a marine reputedly told a reporter in January that no amphibious assault would take place,<sup>23</sup> and Washington warned CNN reporters in Baghdad just before the beginning of the air campaign that they were in extreme danger, and should leave immediately.<sup>24</sup>

However, all we can know of the media is what they choose to tell us. The assumptions outlined here have no real impact on any findings or conclusions in this thesis. The focus is not what individuals, whatever their capacity, may or may not have known, but what information was made available to the public. In both cases cited above, the information the reporters had happened to be true, but had no impact because they did not report what they knew to the public.

#### DEFINITIONS

"Prediction" is a key word in this endeavor. For this thesis, predictions that the media made may include known information. That is, their foundation of knowledge about a particular event went beyond

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<sup>23</sup>Friedman, Desert Victory, 208.

<sup>24</sup>Ibid., 208.

simple guesswork, as is true of the reporters cited above. In its broadest sense, prediction is defined as any foretelling of an event that had not yet occurred at the time of reporting in a format available for public consumption.

It is also important to note that media "predictions" will also encompass predictions *others* made that the journalist reports. Very few journalists, with perhaps the exception of some leading columnists, will go so far out on a limb as to blatantly "make a prediction." Rather, they interview numerous people, assemble their facts, and in the process of creating and editing a paper, generally include their biases and beliefs.

"Accuracy" is also a key word, central to the paper. It will not be defined in a statistical, correlated fashion, but will suggest a similarity between a reporter's description of future events and the reality as it happened. This definition considers the rule of indeterminacy; that is never to predict anything too precisely to avoid being too wrong.

With due respect to Richard Halloran, who says "the media is a myth,"<sup>25</sup> I will use "media" in this thesis to mean generally the community of public and private enterprise reporting through print and electronic means information that is available to the public. I will try to make a distinction in every case between military media and non-military media. The exception is prior-service military, hired by

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<sup>25</sup>Halloran, "Soldiers and Scribblers," 41.

commercial news institutions to serve as analysts. In those instances I will use the term "media analyst."

The gulf crisis was given two separate labels as it unfolded in time. When there was uncertainty as to whether or not there would be armed conflict, it was called Operation Desert Shield. During the offensive phase it was called Operation Desert Storm. Because chronologically in dealing with events it will be evident that I am discussing Operation Desert Shield or Desert Storm, for purposes of brevity, and in retrospect, I will refer to the entire historical event as Desert Storm, ODS, or the Gulf War. Similarly, when discussing troops, units, or services, unless otherwise specified they may be assumed to be U.S. forces.

"Predictive validity" will be the central measurement for all data, and is defined as "the extent that forecasts about events or conditions external to the study are shown to correspond to actual events or conditions."<sup>26</sup>

#### LIMITATIONS

This thesis will not incorporate any classified information. While used for my general background knowledge, it will not be necessary to include in the final paper, and would make the conclusions too restrictive. Other than for necessary background information, this

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<sup>26</sup>Robert P. Weber, Basic Content Analysis Second Edition, (A Sage University Paper, 1990): 20.

thesis will not attempt to address other controversial military-media issues, to include whether press pools were successful, information leaks or any damage they might have caused, operational security violations, or censorship. All will be discussed briefly, but only for a more complete understanding of the information available to the media, their ability to get the information they wanted for their stories, and their interaction with the military.

### DELIMITATIONS

To locate every prediction made by anyone in the media about any facet of Desert Storm would require years of research by a large group of people. The sections covering literature review and methodology will show the scope and breadth of research, and will be broad enough to support conclusions.

Content analysis was conducted using only magazine articles due to insufficiency of time. In point of fact, they were the only written material that could be scanned, cleaned up, and processed accurately within the required period.

As mentioned in Chapter 2, I attempted to view post-war video tapes produced by CNN, but rapidly learned that they were historical documentaries rather than collections of newscasts. Although television news is certainly an important facet of journalism, time constraints did not allow reviewing the hundreds of hours of reporting to include in

this thesis; therefore, it dealt specifically with newspapers, magazines, and periodicals.

For the same reason, no effort was made to find every predictive trend journalists' made for content analysis. The words chosen for profiling are not an implication that others may not have been as good; only that they were representative of the period in question.

## CHAPTER 2

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

I found no published literature dealing with media predictions of events in Desert Storm, or any other military operation. To lay a foundation for thesis development, which will be discussed in Chapter 3, several publications were helpful to establish background information. Friedman's Desert Victory: The War For Kuwait was an extremely valuable source. A defense analyst, Friedman looked at pre-war Iraq, its struggle with Iran, and at Hussein's rise to power. He analyzed the tension, U.S. and coalition involvement, and examined the stages of the crisis.

Maj. (Retired) James Blackwell's Thunder in the Desert: The Strategy and Tactics of the Persian Gulf War was equally valuable. Blackwell was CNN's military affairs analyst and after a brief review of Iraqi ancient history gave a very good account of the conflict from start to finish. His remuneration of CNN's conduct, war gaming, and analysis was also educational.

For a more succinct chronology of events, the September 1991 Military Review was extremely helpful. The capstone documents were the campaign plan (Secret) and deception plan (Secret), which were used for my understanding of the commander's intent. Bob Woodward's book The



Commanders gave me great insight into Washington's planning process and a good understanding of the Pentagon's decisions. Information from The Commanders was used for a better understanding of the "three-legged stool" that supports this paper: political, military, and journalism.

CNN's video Desert Storm: the War Begins, narrated by Bernard Shaw, served as an initial broadcast media perspective of actual events, but could not be used, as it was produced after the war was over. Preview of two other videos yielded the same results; the videos were documentaries rather than assembled newscasts.

It was necessary while writing background to reach further back in order position this thesis in time. The Sidle Report was the baseline for discussion of military-media relations, as was a new AUSA book titled Newsmen & National Defense: Is Conflict Inevitable?. Guidelines for the press in ODS were captured in a Defense 91 article by Pete Williams, and were used to gain an understanding of media opportunities and constraints in Southwest Asia.

These background sources were used to position the topic. Predictions are probably best when culled from extensive, accurate facts. By design, then, the research for this thesis looked not only at media predictions and their accuracy, but also attempted to learn the set of circumstances that led to the predictions I found. It was therefore necessary to examine relationships, capabilities, and general information about Iraq, Hussein, and the coalition.

A brief diversion in this thesis will look at a very limited scope of *military* predictions involving Desert Storm, as a vehicle for

comparison given two reputedly different mind sets. If I suppose that, given sufficient information, one "military mind" may reasonably be expected to act like another, it would be expected that some members of the military community could predict what actions the U.S. and coalition forces would take. That is not to say that all military think alike. It is merely an assumption that, given a roughly equal background, knowledge of doctrine, and experience, that military, as a group, might tend to understand themselves better than "outsiders" would. This is an important logic step for establishing the ability to make an accurate prediction.

It would then follow that, given information of a general nature and some experience with the military, a reporter could make that same conclusion. If, however, both the military and the media as a body made essentially bad predictions, research regarding the information that was generally available to both becomes more important. To answer that question I will use some papers written at the Command and General Staff College in November 1990 and analyses by scholars and associates of the Washington Institute as published in their Gulfwatch Anthology.

I queried the major networks and CNN to learn whether they had conducted any research as to the accuracy of their predictions. As of the completion date of this paper, none responded. I then turned to newspapers and magazines for printed specifics. Magazines included several issues of Newsweek, Time, and U.S. News & World Report, as well as National Review, Aviation Week and Space Technology, Business Week, Forbes, MacLeans, and The Economist. After two data base searches, each

issue of the magazines listed above, from August 1990 to February 1991, were reviewed for any articles not found by computer search. Associates that knew of this thesis also assisted, providing me with any articles they came across.

Newspapers included those listed in the bibliography, and generally consisted of national, East Coast liberal, Mid-West, and local issues. Articles from newspapers were initially taken from three separate data base searches. The first two searches were conducted using "prediction," "viewpoint," "scenario," and other key words to attempt to separate predictive articles from general news. The last was a general query for information about the Gulf War, which was screened for promising titles or key words. Every issue of the Raleigh, North Carolina News and Observer from January 15 to February 28, 1991 was reviewed, based on availability. Extracting so many articles from one single source should not have skewed the data; many of them were from wire reports, syndicated columnists, or API/UPI.

Content analysis for research data was devised largely from ideas culled from Robert P. Weber's Basic Content Analysis, with additional material from The General Enquirer's A Computer Approach to Content Analysis, published by the Michigan Institute of Technology.

### CHAPTER 3

#### METHODS AND PROCEDURES

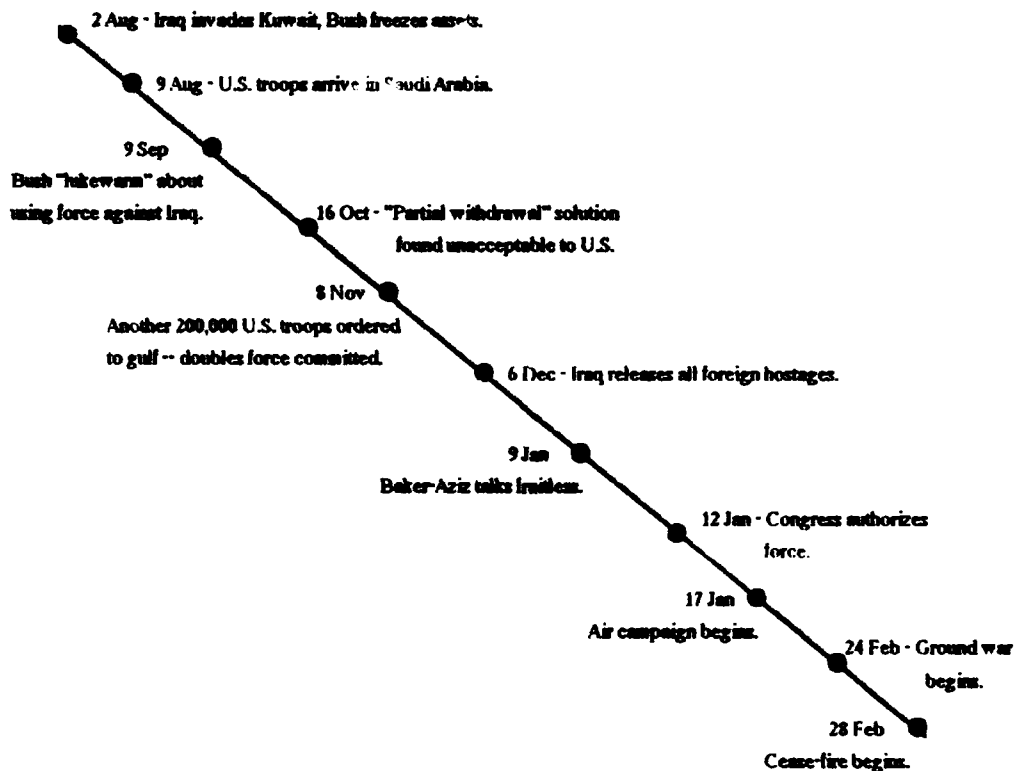
As outlined in the background section, a chronology of the major events is located at Figure 1. Using that chronology, I briefly looked at some military predictions made in an effort to anticipate events. Great care was taken when doing so, as the Department of Defense or Central Command (CENTCOM) might have incorporated some of those ideas to shape their plans, turning the data into a tool for change rather than a prediction.

With the exception of some background material, most of the data analyzed in this thesis was written, primary evidence. Once I either established the plausibility of predictability or found that none existed, I examined media predictions. Specific events were categorized by the following phases:

- a. Deployment/force build-up.
- b. Initial combat operations (the air campaign).
- c. Ground campaign.

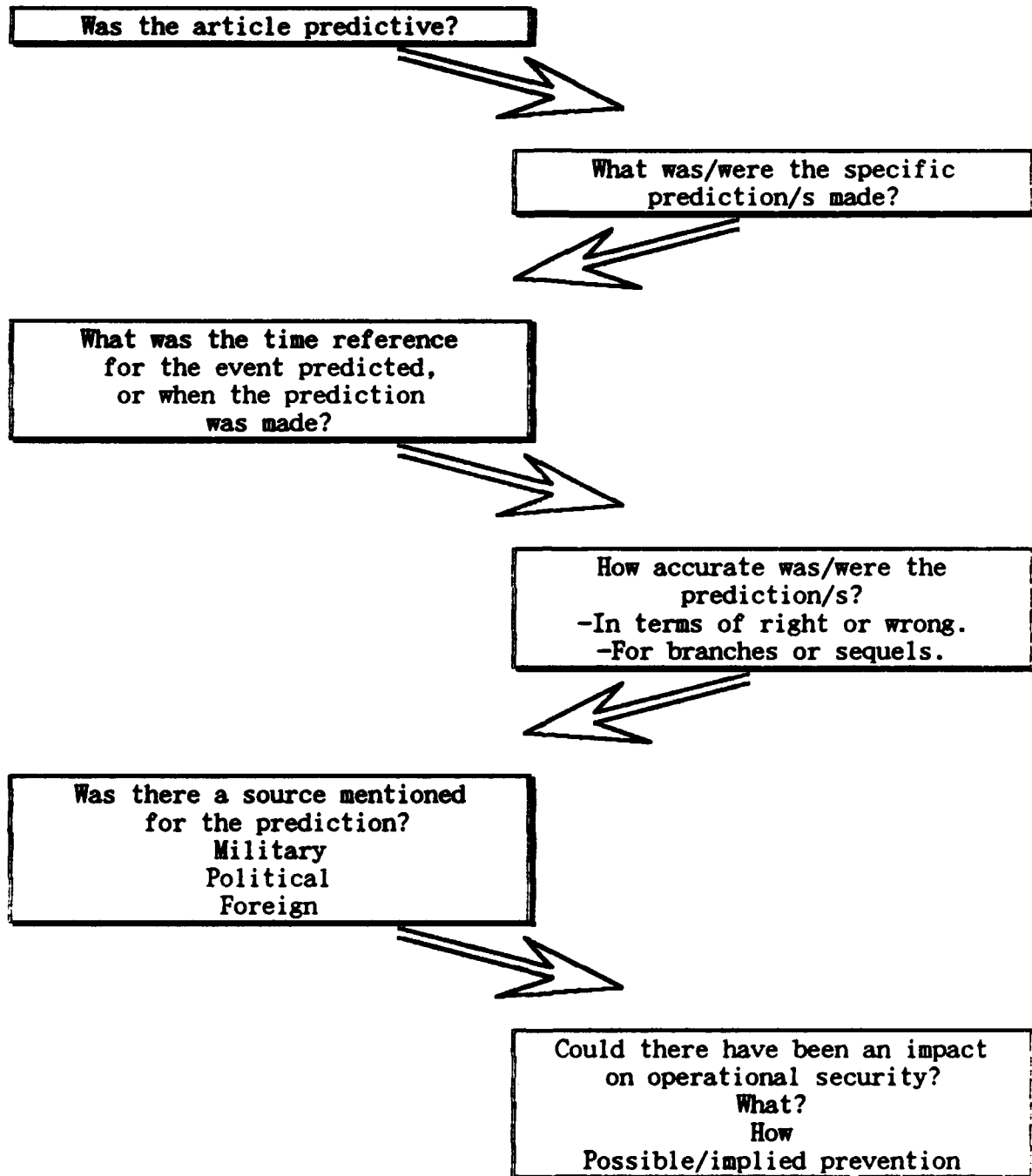
Within each area I examined media articles to determine how accurately they foresaw when each phase would begin, what major events would take place during that phase, and what the outcome would be. The flow of review and general analysis is depicted in Figure 2.

When an event would take place did not necessarily mean the specific date, (although it could have), but meant correct identification of the criteria that (CENTCOM) felt must be met before escalation. For example, some media predicted that the force buildup was only posturing, and that diplomacy would prevail, while others predicted the use of air and naval forces. If, however, a journalist speculated that the U.S. would use ground forces, but foretold an immediate initial use, it would not be a correct prediction.



*Figure 1. Chronology of Events*

Throughout the process of gathering predictive articles I attempted to discard all opinions rather than predictions; the " in



*Figure 2. Methodology Flow*

order to avoid situation x, we should do y." I also discarded the "what-ifs." In every case, when a journalist pondered what the outcome of an action might be, the focus was on the result, and was not a valid prediction.

It was not enough, however, to simply tally all instances in which a reporter guessed some aspect of Desert Storm correctly. The purpose of this thesis was to determine whether or not the media may have closely described U.S. national or military goals, operational plans, and force composition or employment before the event. If so, I attempted to examine any effect that might have on current military-media relations and either a need for increased operational security or reduced constraints on media.

Content analysis was used to determine whether there were general trends as the conflict unfolded. A sampling of magazine articles was profiled for frequency of word usage by scanning the articles onto a disk and using a spell-checker to correct errors the scanner may have made. Then, using Reference Software's Grammatik Windows, a word frequency list was compiled for each article. The words "economic," "air," "war," "ground," "marine," and "tank" were counted. Other words with construct validity<sup>1</sup>, such as "sanction," "embargo," "leatherneck," and "armor," were included with the appropriate word listed above, essentially turning some words into categories.

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<sup>1</sup>Robert P. Weber, Basic Content Analysis Second Edition, (A Sage University Paper, 1990), 19.

error in the process. However, "errors found in the course of present research can be used to make better specifications for the future."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>The General Inquirer, A Computer Approach To Content Analysis, (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 1966), 9.



Those words were then plotted by month, to see if any predictive trend could be identified. The controlling hypothesis was that as events unfolded and more information became available, reporters who predicted what might happen generally became more accurate.

The key in applying the methodology to the research was not a matter of finding every predictive article written, analyzing each and every one of them, and recording the predictions in painstaking detail. The intended purpose was to find as many appropriate articles as possible in a reasonable period of time, and come to some general conclusions about what was predicted, and how those predictions might have an effect on military operations or security.

As for content analysis, in addition to being an aid to finding trends, a secondary benefit was possible if it demonstrated that a mathematical approach may be applied to a sociological problem. Current events could be then be analyzed as they occur to observe vectors, or trends toward accuracy.

In any case, Weber, in Basis Content Analysis, concluded that the "key" to content analysis

is choosing a strategy for information loss that yields substantially interesting and theoretically useful generalizations while reducing the amount of information analyzed and reported by the investigator.

I have attempted to achieve that goal within this thesis. Because judgment was used in the analysis, and because it was impossible to evaluate all published information, there is undoubtedly a degree of

## CHAPTER 4

### DISCUSSION

Some reporters, either subject-matter experts or experienced military-oriented journalists, came close to accurate predictions, even given a limited ability to gather current information. For example, Blackwell, in Thunder in the Desert, recounts CNN's coverage of coalition efforts to defeat Scuds. In assessing the importance of defeating them, he "felt sure that the allies were doing more than they were saying publicly about their search for Scud launchers." He "knew of several systems that could be brought to bear on the problem and correctly guessed that Central Command was indeed employing them in the anti-Scud role." CNN's subsequent story focusing on the new Joint Surveillance Target Attack Radar System (JSTARS) resulted in an agitated Pentagon until Blackwell pointed out that he had merely assembled the facts and guessed at the truth.<sup>1</sup>

As ground forces were preparing for the attack, Blackwell also noticed an absence of input from those reporters with the VII and XVIII Corps. Understanding that "someone wanted to obscure the location" of those units, Blackwell had "no desire to speculate on that issue." He

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<sup>1</sup>James Blackwell, Thunder In The Desert (Bantam Books, October 1991), 140.

also assumed then that a ground attack was imminent, and began exploring the options.<sup>2</sup> A review of CNN coverage would be required to learn if they made that knowledge public, or in some way "telegraphed" their belief.

On the other hand, there was a general assumption that Iraq was much stronger than it turned out to be. There was also a lingering post-Vietnam fear that anything the military got involved in would turn out to be a bloody debacle, even if the U.S. could, in the end, claim victory. To reiterate what I established in the background chapter, Iraq did not frequently behave in what we, at least as westerners, would understand to be a rational manner.

Background suggesting that the military constrained the media in theater and that there were few, if any, leaks or security violations, indicates that little if any harm was done to military operations as a result of media reports. Lt. Gen. (Retired) Thomas Kelly indicated that the media posed no problems during ODS<sup>3</sup>, although according to Maj. Gen. (Retired) Perry Smith, Schwarzkopf at one point had some difficulty with an analyst who "revealed military secrets and speculated too much on exact military options."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 177.

<sup>3</sup>Question posed of Lt. Gen. Thomas Kelly during guest speaker program at the US Army Command and General Staff Officer's Course, 19 February 1992.

<sup>4</sup>Perry Smith, How CNN Fought the War, 74.

To their credit, it also should be noted that in several sources I found claims by reporters that they did have information that could be damaging to the coalition effort, but refrained from airing or printing it until it was no longer of any military significance. An amusing anecdote, though, was provided by Lt. Col. John Garlinger, with the US Army Public Affairs, New York Branch. Apparently Fred Francis, two weeks prior to the start of the ground war, was on camera with complete graphics of the ground campaign inadvertently left on the wall behind him.

#### MILITARY PREDICTIONS

Regarding military predictions, Jacob W. Kipp, a senior analyst for the Soviet Army Studies Office, wrote a memorandum September 17, 1990, that discussed the "Strategic Framework for the Iraq Problem." In that paper, Kipp's predictions for U.S. and coalition action included a ground and amphibious envelopment of Kuwait City. He also recommended that a ground attack be preceded by an air/anti-air campaign, and advised destruction of Iraqi military power before working toward a "negotiated political solution."<sup>5</sup>

Clearly, Kipp's "predictions" are analysis of the situation in Kuwait, U.S. interests and objectives, and recommendations for courses

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<sup>5</sup>Memo, Jacob W. Kipp to SASO Director, 17 September 1990, "Strategic Framework for the Iraq Problem," 1,2.

of action. He went on to say, however, that "military operations must be conducted in Iraq along the line Basra-Baghdad," and that "any analyst who expects the Iraqi Army to disintegrate in the face of such operations is deceiving himself."<sup>6</sup> His conclusion was that coalition forces, to be successful, must take Baghdad.

Maj. Kenneth R. Dombroski, with the Combat Studies Institute at the U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, also made some predictions in an early November information paper. He correctly anticipated armed conflict, but predicted that the main allied attack would be an "envelopment around the right flank in the Neutral Zone."<sup>7</sup> He then predicted a series of Iraqi withdrawals to subsequent defensive belts, followed by an Iraqi request for a UN peacekeeping force. In as much as Hussein is still in power with the remnants of his army, Dombroski correctly foresaw the end state, but called it a "strategic victory for Saddam Hussein."<sup>8</sup>

It is interesting that, with two additional pieces of information Dombroski wrote an update later that month. During the interim, Hussein had fortified his defense in Kuwait, and experienced Iraqi generals had been replaced by relative novices. With that information, Dombroski

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<sup>6</sup>Ibid., 3.

<sup>7</sup>Info Paper, MAJ Kenneth R. Dombroski, 6 November 1990, "Iraqi Strategy in Kuwait — Scenario," 2.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., 3.

predicted a more "cautious and hesitant" enemy, and their likely defeat "at the hands of a more operationally flexible enemy." <sup>9</sup>

No better example serves to underscore the idea that, given sufficient data and reflection, accurate predictions are possible. In this case, wide of the mark initially, Dombroski basically used articles published in the Washington Times to adjust his forecast accurately.

Regarding the phasing of Desert Storm operations, Dombroski wrote a third memorandum 26 November. After analyzing a calendar that included moon, weather, and other data, he predicted an air campaign, "to begin around 2 February." He forecast a ground campaign to begin around the 11th, and an amphibious attack the 16th of February. <sup>10</sup> The calendar he used was a graphic appearing in the Lawton Constitution in November<sup>11</sup>. Titled "Guessing When a Gulf War Might Start," it indicated changing seasons, moonless nights, favorable tides, and both Islamic and Western holidays. The final U.S. troop buildup was expected to finish in January.

Both the Constitution and Dombroski considered a two-week air campaign as opposed to the almost month-long pounding Hussein's troops took. Both also looked to an amphibious assault into Kuwait. The force

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<sup>9</sup>Memo, Kenneth R. Dombroski to Deputy Commandant, CGSC, 20 November 1990, "Iraqi Strategy Update," 1-3.

<sup>10</sup>Memo, Kenneth R. Dombroski to Deputy Commandant, CGSC, 26 November 1990, "Iraqi Strategy — Assessing U.S. Intentions," 1-3.

<sup>11</sup>"Guessing When a Gulf War May Start," The Lawton Constitution (Thursday, November 22, 1990): 6A.

buildup was completed earlier in January, the air campaign lasted longer, and there was no amphibious assault. Although these predictions were not borne out, I would submit that the Constitution and Dombroski did not do too badly.

Written in November, before the President made any ultimatums, the predictions were within 30 days of accurate. There was a war; Dombroski's overriding assumption was that Hussein would not back down and that the U.S. would fight. A tenet of deception plans is that they be believable. FM 90-2, Battlefield Deception, even recommends selection of a second-best course of action, reserving the best course for a deception.

The other key element in evaluating Dombroski's predictions was the change that occurred over time. That evolution toward more accurate predictions was, in large part, the focus of the content analysis that will be discussed in Chapter 5.

Scholars with the Washington Institute followed a similar pattern with their predictions. In September their feeling was that there would be no armed conflict. Based on embargoes, economic sanctions, and diplomacy, they felt that Iraq could be forced into leaving Kuwait. Their fear was that resolution of that nature would lay a foundation for more dire conflict in the future.<sup>12</sup> A different article published later

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<sup>12</sup>Martin Indyk, "The U.S. Strategy Debate Over the Gulf," Gulfwatch Anthology: The Day-By-Day Analysis of the Gulf Crisis By the Scholars and Associates of The Washington Institute (The Washington Institute for Near East Policy, 1991): 3.

that month also concluded that military action was "unlikely." The crux of the argument was that defensive capability did not equate to offensive intentions.<sup>13</sup>

An article dated November 1, 1990 in the same publication dramatically altered the Institute's position. Citing the "unprecedented rapid build-up of American military power in the Persian Gulf," the article concluded that "there is a growing chance that the United States will use military force against Iraq within the next few months." That same article also predicted that if U.S. forces attempted to drive Iraq out of Kuwait losses would be heavy against "such a dug-in, competent opponent," and that other coalition forces were unlikely to support us for an attack.<sup>14</sup> By December, Feuerwerger predicted that Iraq would probably not attack Israel despite their rhetoric, because "it does not make sense."<sup>15</sup>

Army Col. (Retired) Walter P. Lang works as an intelligence officer for the Defense Intelligence Agency. He was arguably not only the first American to see the Iraqi attack forming, but also one of the first to believe that there would be an attack. Based on satellite photographs that he first noticed mid-month, he sent a message on July

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<sup>13</sup>Marvin Feuerwerger, "Will the United States Go To War?," Gulfwatch Anthology, 23.

<sup>14</sup>Marvin Feuerwerger, "Growing Prospects for War," Gulfwatch Anthology, 55,56.

<sup>15</sup>Marvin Feuerwerger, "The Prospects for an Iraq-Israel Confrontation," Gulfwatch Anthology, 105.



30 to the head of the DIA. He stated that Hussein was capable of launching an attack no-notice. Lang observed that he did not believe Hussein was bluffing, and regarding the size and scope of forces poised on Iraq's southern border that Hussein "intends to use it."<sup>16</sup>

It may seem initially that Lang's prediction was no surprise. With actual satellite photos available, the build up and intent should have been clear. It is important to note again that, even at that late date no one knew absolutely Hussein's intent. In a January 7, 1991 meeting, Lang briefed the President that Iraq wouldn't back down. "They will fight skillfully and hard. They are tough.... They won't surrender." He also anticipated a "prolonged ground campaign to dig them out" should the President make that decision.<sup>17</sup> Even when Bush pointed out that many Arabs thought differently, Lang, as an area expert, held his ground.

Perhaps the most damaging information was Gen. Michael Dugan's. As Air Force Chief, he met with the press and was quoted on 16 September 1990 as saying:

The Joint Chiefs of Staff have concluded that U.S. military air power — including a massive bombing campaign against Baghdad that specifically targets Iraqi President Saddam Hussein — is the only effective option to force Iraqi forces from Kuwait if war erupts.<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Bob Woodward, The Commanders (Simon and Schuster, 1991): 216-217.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., 359.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid., 290.

The problem, of course, was that Dugan was not predicting, nor was he speaking on behalf of the Joint Chiefs of staff or the National Command Authority. He also alluded to assassination, which is illegal, and intimated that air power alone was the best course of action. Analysis will show during that period whether or not the media, other than reporting the incident, took any stock in Dugan's comments.

Early in October, Powell apparently believed that containment was working. The strength of the coalition and economic sanctions had left Iraq "condemned, scorned and isolated as perhaps no country had been in modern history."<sup>19</sup> Woodward proposes in The Commanders that Powell was inclined to use military force only as a last resort. Rather than becoming convinced over time that it was the only alternative, Woodward suggests that Powell merely fell in line with the President's guidance.

These predictions show, in a rough way, how the crisis was viewed over time in 1990. Generally wide of the mark initially, predictions, again, became more accurate as events unfolded. They still lacked accuracy of detail, due to reasons already cited: deception, overawe of Hussein's army, and belief that Hussein would act in a predictable fashion.

The following chapters will examine and analyze media predictions. As indicated by the military predictions, content analysis will be the tool used to show a change of trend in predictions over time.

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<sup>19</sup>Ibid., 299.

## CHAPTER 5

### MEDIA ANALYSIS

#### Common Threads

In gathering predictive articles to analyze, the most striking first observation was that so few were available. Among the vast quantity of articles written about politics, diplomacy, sanctions, deployments, and a blow-by-blow of events as they happened, very few reporters tried to use crystal balls. Of those that did, most attributed their guesses to someone else; a State Department official, Pentagon source, institutional analyst; the attribution flowed freely. In the end, though, this thesis attributes the predictions made in those articles to the journalists who assembled the information and wrote them.

There is no inference that journalists are not creative or that they rely on others for their themes and conclusions. In general, they gather large, sometimes vast quantities of information, then sculpt, mold, and refine it into something they will put their name to and call their own. Their final product has ultimately been processed through a unique filter of beliefs, opinions, and likes or dislikes.

In any case, to assemble their stories they must select those pieces of information most relevant to them to use. The presumption, not a large leap of logic, is that they often must choose from conflicting data to write their articles. Although a journalist may have attributed a course of action, campaign philosophy, or chain of events to someone else, if the article made a prediction it was used as part of the research for this thesis. The prediction was still attributed to the reporter who wrote the story, although I also frequently identified the information source. As outlined in Chapter 1, that also includes military analysts, such as Edward Luttwak, a defense analyst at the Center for Strategic and International Studies, and Col. (Retired) David Hackworth, who signed on with Newsweek and also appeared on television talk shows and news reports.

Even though, as stated, only a small percentage of the total articles written concerning the Gulf crisis were predictive, there were still over two hundred assembled and analyzed against the methodology outlined in Figure 2, Chapter 3. The predictions were usually caveated with words designed to hedge; "might, if, possible, and could" are typical examples.

For this chapter, some general predictive trends will be outlined for each phase of the campaign, with special emphasis on predictions as to how the U.S. would fight the war, strategically or tactically. Following that, again for each phase, several articles that were most representative, most unique, most right, or most wrong will be individually treated. Finally, I will draw conclusions in Chapter 6.

## DEPLOYMENT (THE BUILDUP)

During the period of buildup and sanctions, predictions followed a general, yet varied, theme. Journalists predicted war by a small margin as the likely scenario. An air campaign was the first step, and usually expected to be insufficient to resolve the conflict. For the most part, with some notable exceptions that will be pointed out, a long and bloody ground battle then ensued, ending in Iraq's defeat at the expense of thousands of Americans killed.

August was a confused month. The media telegraphed numerous conflicting scenarios, ranging from an Iraqi foray into Saudi Arabia and immediate U.S. attacks to rapid, peaceful solutions taking place. All confusion aside, there was a fairly even split by the end of the month: I found four predictions that diplomacy would triumph, and five that war would be necessary. The rest of the articles predicted variations or combinations of both.

Some early articles predicted an October or early November 1990 attack, primarily based on fickle public support, weather, and perhaps simply an American desire to "get it over with" quickly. Later in September, and then obviously for the rest of the year, predictions as to when an attack might occur became more accurate. The adjustments were made largely because of additional troop deployments that began in

mid-September. Most reporters then realized that the scope of U.S. involvement on the ground would be much larger than initially anticipated, and would consequently take more time.

The first predictive article found after Iraq invaded Kuwait sums up the latter opinion, and appeared on August 8, 1990 on page A-11 of The New York Times. Titled "Few Choices Seen For Iraqi Leader," by Michael Wines, the articles discussed a cornered Hussein, "...unexpectedly faced with a rapid and menacing global response to his invasion." The articles covered his apparent options, and closed on this note, attributed to a government source:

To concede defeat now would wreck President Hussein's dream of leadership in the Arab world. "If you believe this guy wants a bigger position in the world, a position with the have-nots of the Arab world cheering him on, then he's not going to back down.

The prediction, and tone of the article, was that Hussein would not back down; the general trend of thought that gradually took precedence throughout the fall and early winter of 1990. There was optimism in many articles, but usually accompanied by fear that a diplomatic solution was just that; a dim hope.

Hussein was counseled in the same paper the next day by Luttwak to "dig in, consolidate his gains in Kuwait and take no offensive action." The prediction in that article was that if Hussein did not immediately take advantage of his initial success and push into Saudi Arabia, he would not be able to do so later. Luttwak's bottom line was that Hussein was unlikely to attack, based on a fear of coup and other Iraqi vulnerabilities and limitations.

A few days later in The Washington Post, Robin Wright also predicted that, because Hussein had not immediately attacked Saudi Arabia, war would probably not happen, resulting in a "quagmire," with the U.S. tied up, "mired in the crisis." The Hartford Journal saw things differently when, on August 15, Ronald Kiener wrote that there was "...no viable military option that will push Hussein out of Kuwait, not without a cost that the American people will find too hard to bear." His advice was to leave the Iraqis to the Arab nations. Kiener's article was not predictive *per se*, but was representative of many pessimistic articles that appeared throughout August.

The Orlando Sentinel summed up the diplomatic option on August 29 with an unattributed article titled "A Chance to Avoid War." Even though the general tone (or prediction) was that Washington appeared pessimistic, the story pointed out that the "potential for negotiating a settlement is greater now than at any time during the crisis."

Predictions stabilized thereafter for the rest of the year, with a tally of 19 predicting war and three holding out for diplomatic settlement. Richard Cohen wrote an article for the September 7 issue of The Washington Post in which he pointed out that the "awful logic points to war." Martin Merzer, in The Miami Herald, agreed that "the latter half of October looks like the optimum time for military action."

Randolph Ryan, writing for The Boston Globe, was more realistic, predicting that Hussein would "sit tight," the force deployments would continue, the embargo would be ineffective over time, and an attack would eventually take place.

One of the best summations for the hawks was given by David Brown, in the article whose word count appears at the end of this thesis (Appendix A):

Barring a totally unforeseen miracle, there will be an armed struggle with Iraq for the simple reason that no nation in the area can afford to leave things as they are.<sup>1</sup>

Even the stories that still held out for diplomatic solutions late in the year had militant undertones. The best example was Zbigniew Brzezinski's "Still a Chance for a Peaceful Solution," which ran in the Washington Post December 28. The hope was for peace, but the predictions, made in the form of four possible scenarios, included war in all but one.

By November, a fairly accurate assessment of the probable duration appeared in the November 8 Washington Post article "Pentagon: Victory in Less Than 3 Months." The article, written by Jack Anderson and Dale Van Atta, claimed that the U.S. could "win a war against Iraq in under three months," with attribution to "secret Pentagon estimates." The implied security violation was discounted after reading the rest of the article. Technology, pilot-training, force structure, and terrain were the considerations used to support the conclusion.

Anderson and Van Atta also predicted the strategic flow of the battle; one of four such predictions found in 1990 articles. They foresaw a three-attack front; a main attack north from Saudi Arabia,

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<sup>1</sup>David A. Brown, "Armed Struggle Seems Inevitable In Complex Middle Eastern Situation," Aviation Week & Space Technology, (Sep 10, 1990): 47.



with two supporting attacks; one from the Persian Gulf (presumably an amphibious assault) and one from Turkey after negotiations with that country. The victory would be rapid, yet costly.

George Church, writing for Time Magazine's September 24 issue, was more detailed. Labeling a massive air campaign a "half-war," he predicted air power would turn southern Iraq into a "parking lot." F-117s would take out anti-air missiles, while cruise missiles destroyed command and control facilities, logistic depots, and munitions factories. Church saw no bombing of electrical, chemical, or nuclear facilities. He predicted no ground fighting initially, but eventual airborne and amphibious operations, with one scenario (the most optimistic) ending as Hussein's generals deposed him and "sued for peace."

William Dowell, with Frank Melville and Bruce van Voorst, also devised a detailed scenario for Time's December 10 issue ("If War Begins"). They also believed an air campaign would initiate hostilities, but thought it would be in the form of "surgical strikes," which would then escalate into a "massive bombing campaign." They believed the initial targets would be the Iraqi air force and bases, with air superiority gained in less than a week. The bombing campaign would take out Iraq's "war-related facilities," and Hussein would give up rapidly. Dowell made no predictions about a ground war, but also concluded that if one happened it would be very bloody. He described an AirLand battle scenario with attack on a narrow front against weak spots in Iraqi defenses.

The most detailed prediction by far was made by Russell Watson, John Barry, Douglas Waller, Ray Wilkinson, and Theodore Stanger in a collective effort called "What to Expect in a War," that appeared in Newsweek on September 3. In a two-page layout they graphically depicted a three-phase operation. In phase one, ground forces would conduct a holding action, fixing Iraqi forces while the air force interdicted their lines of communication. Phase two would see airborne units, working with covert special operations forces, take Kuwait City while air assault forces took and held the Al Matla Ridge. Phase three would "paralyze Iraq" by stopping enemy reinforcements from reaching Kuwait, destroying their air power, and severing command and control facilities, to include all electricity to Baghdad.

Obviously, there is no clear way of knowing how much, if any, classified information was given to any of these journalists. Discussions with military leaders and planners took place, but nothing that appeared in any of the predictions could be called classified. There was enough truth to all the scenarios that the public would believe the media were in tune operationally with the military, but none were completely accurate. There is, of course, always the possibility that Gen. Schwarzkopf, and Hussein, were well aware of these scenarios, which might have helped shape the deception and final campaign plans.

The first two weeks in January 1991, so close to the actual start of the air campaign, were analyzed separately from the other deployment and build-up predictions. Presumably by that time events had matured to a far greater extent, possibly allowing more refined and accurate

predictions. Economic or diplomatic solutions were, by that time, a rarity. The theme became more focused, and more accurate. War would happen, an air campaign would not be sufficient to end the conflict, and it would be a short, but bloody contest.

One notable exception was Charles Lane's article "Saddam's Endgame," in the January 7 issue of Newsweek. He concluded his article with the observation that:

Today Saddam hesitates to believe that Bush will carry out his promise to use force against him. The stage is now set for what could prove to be the Iraqi strongman's most brilliant gamble yet--or his most disastrous miscalculation.

However, he spent the majority of his story predicting that the diplomatic dance was far from over; Hussein had only to say the word and there would be no war. In fairness to Lane, his article tended to be more a review of events than a prediction of the future, but raises a critical point none the less.

Without degenerating into a discussion of fate or whether or not something that has already happened could have turned out differently, the journalists' whose predictions during this period were wrong, were not unrealistic. To review briefly what was outlined in Chapter 1, the reputedly strong, battle-hardened Iraqi army was key to the belief that American casualties would be large. The continued buildup of forces over time, the continued U.S. and Soviet attempts at talks and peaceful solutions gave some consideration for hope, and Hussein's rhetoric all combined to draw fairly conclusive possible scenarios.

Hussein did not back down, but he could have, Arab mind-set notwithstanding. The National Command Authority or Pentagon leaders could have tried to control Desert Storm from Washington, possibly delaying a victory, but they didn't. Lane's article, in these critical last days before the storm broke, was an exception in it's hope for peace, but fairly typical in that the scenario was still, at that time, possible.

More probable, though, and more prevalent, were articles like Dan Balz's "Options Dwindle as Adversaries Face Deadline," that ran in The Washington Post two days before the air campaign began. With the deadline looming, there was considerable discussion of Hussein pulling out of Kuwait, or his victory if the U.S. did not react immediately, but the attitude that permeated the article was one of impending war.

The other articles written during that period can be summed up in the opening paragraph of Robert Steinbrook and Janny Scott's article titled "High Casualty Rate for Brief Period Seen," on the front page of the Los Angeles Times January 15:

If war breaks out in the Persian Gulf, military medicine specialists are making the following predictions: As many as one out of every five soldiers seriously injured will die within several hours, and half of those who die will bleed to death.

To summarize the deployment phase, predictions of an impending military operation were more frequent than not. Attribution during this period was largely to either White House sources or Pentagon officials. None of the journalists who predicted the way the campaign would unfold were correct, but the majority had elements of truth. There was no

evidence of predictions that were "too accurate;" that is, that could cause damage to U.S. plans or operations. Most articles predicted a short, but extremely bloody war.

General Dugan's comments had no impact on predictions. While virtually every medium reported his speech, nowhere did I find any cause to believe his views or assessment were used in any way to lend legitimacy to a forecast. As one example, in over three hundred articles read, none predicted that an assassination would be attempted (although several argued that it should be).

#### AIR CAMPAIGN

The day before the air campaign Cox News Service released an article titled "Pizza Index Hints at Action as Orders Mushroom in D.C." The story, appearing on page one of The North Carolina News and Observer, claimed that Domino's pizza deliveries that night to the Pentagon were the highest they had been since Operation Just Cause in Panama. Pointing out that pizza deliveries to the Pentagon after 10 p.m. was "highly unusual," the owner of several D.C. area Domino's Pizza outlets mused that Pentagon officials probably were not "sitting around watching Redskins' reruns."

That was the most accurate prediction found in research for this thesis. Although a specific time was not given, the clear intent was that something would happen within the next 24 hours, which was the case. That prediction was the primary cause for development of this

paper: did media predictions cause breaches of security that could hurt military operations?

In the previous section predictions showed that from August 1990 to mid-January 1991, that was not the case. The same holds true for predictions written during the air campaign, from January 17 to February 23, the eve of the ground battle. Several journalists just prior to the ground attack used the word "imminent," but so had others, as early as late January. But even though Iraq was issued specific deadlines before the air and ground campaigns started, no other prediction was made with the clarity of proof held by a "pizza index."

Those of us in the United States during the air campaign remember well the flow of media coverage. Amazement initially (the first 24 hours) when casualties were so light, followed by a national euphoria when they did not significantly increase, even after coalition forces gained first air superiority, and then air supremacy. A lull followed, with few new events taking place, highlighted by questions and speculation as to when a ground war might start. Diversion of air assets to defeat the scud attacks, and a period of poor weather apparently lengthened the air campaign, and concerns of Israeli involvement and obstacle-breaching problems consumed the media and the public.

Predictive articles during this period were jumbled, but most were focused on when a ground war might start, what casualty figures might look like, and several on how a ground campaign might be conducted. Military briefers covered Iraqi targets in detail for the media, so

there was no more guessing as to what air targets would be. Naval involvement, to include sea-launched cruise missiles, were covered extensively, and were no longer a source for speculation.

Luttwak, again writing for the January 24 issue of the Washington Post, became an advocate of Douhet and strategic air power. His article was headlined "Ground Offensive is a Lure to be Resisted," and said "there is the possibility of combat cheap in casualties and as short as two weeks." The caveat was that his scenario was possible only if "two great temptations [were] firmly avoided:" a ground war for the sake of service involvement and diplomatic intrusion into an otherwise successful operation. Air, he felt, could win the war, with ground forces only necessary to mop up what was left.

Lest it be thought that any soldier's cynicism exists in analysis of Luttwak's article, I should point out that he was probably correct. The air campaign, albeit with help from psychological operations, could be seen as a primary reason predictions of high casualty rates never came true.

The argument is easily made that such devastating fire power, against a country with little or no ability to counter it, wrecked the Iraqi's will to fight. Doubters are encouraged to envision a picture of U.S. and coalition ground forces breaching the Iraqi defensive positions after only one or two days of air campaign. The results could have been the same, but much tougher resistance could be anticipated.

Luttwak found a kindred spirit in Richard Perle, also an analyst, who said:

...Hussein is desperate to draw the United States into ground engagements on the Saudi border. And it is why we must not descend from the skies in order to fight on the ground.<sup>2</sup>

Michael Gordon's New York Times article January 27 provides a common counter-prediction to Luttwak and Perle. The headline, "Ground Fighting Likely," was followed by a sub-head stating "Experts say planes alone not enough." The prediction, attributed to "U.S. intelligence officials," was that too little of the Iraqi army had actually been destroyed by air power, and that casualties would mount during an inevitable ground campaign.

Although no real predictions were found concerning chemical warfare, it should also be noted that throughout this period there was a high degree of concern voiced in numerous articles about the threat of chemical or biological weapons, which had an obvious impact on predictions of casualty figures. These concerns were not the result of media overhearing military preparations, but came from a January 29 interview CNN's Peter Arnett had with Hussein. During that interview Hussein intimated that if necessary to preserve his nation, he was willing to employ chemical weapons. As a consequence, journalists continued to voice that concern up to the day that the war concluded.

Predictions for the beginning of a ground war ranged from days to weeks, but none after March 1. Weather and Ramadan were the two predominant reasons for that, until President Bush issued his second

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<sup>2</sup>Richard Perle, "A Ground War is Foolish," U.S News & World Report, (Feb 18, 1991): 33.



deadline for the Iraqis to pullout before February 25. Rather than recapture every prediction about when a ground war would start, most of which used very general language, a review of Headlines, all from the North Carolina News and Observer, will serve as adequate testimony that even a reporter who did very well was simply lost in the shuffle:

February 6	"Bush Expects Ground War."
February 7	"Powell, Cheney Signal No Imminent Ground War."
February 8	"Ground War Inevitable, General Says."
February 9	"Cheney Expects Ground War."
February 12	"Bush Cagney on Start of Ground War."

The predictions followed the same pattern; any time and no time. Tom Morganthau, Douglas Waller, and John Barry captured the confusion in "The Troops March On," a February 25-issue of Newsweek, obviously written before the ground war started. After predicting that a "ground war is imminent," they obtained, from a "senior Pentagon officer," a classic statement about the service media can perform as well as the harm they might do:

If Iraqi intelligence is monitoring the U.S. news media, ...officers now hope it is thoroughly baffled as to where the allied thrust will come from. 'There's been so much speculation about it, people in Baghdad get confused about what's actually being planned.'

Then, in the same article, Morganthau noted that "the entire VII Corps...has disappeared from the map."

The other prediction found most during this period was that an amphibious assault would take place from the Persian Gulf into Kuwait City. Gen. Schwarzkopf, in a televised interview after the war,

specifically stated that the media helped him in that regard by unwittingly helping him spread his deception story. It worked.

The typical prediction was captured in a front-page story from wire reports in the North Carolina News and Observer on February 15. The title, "Marines May Make Move Soon," speaks for the article's content. Based on aircraft carrier movement in the gulf, and in light of the "terrible pounding inflicted on the Iraqi forces," an amphibious assault was seen as imminent.

One prediction that enjoyed wide support was captured in a column by George Will on January 19, also in the North Carolina paper, titled "War's Winner Is Certain, Consequences Not." Although fears of high casualty rates were widespread, it is perhaps not surprising that not one prediction was made naming Iraq the military victor. Will did not even bother to name the winner, only saying "both sides know from the start which side will be the winning side, militarily."

While this seems a statement of the obvious, I may point out that the same was true of the Vietnam Conflict. A brief look at early articles from that war indicated virtually the same predictions; high casualty rates, but a U.S. victory in the end. The unstated question in Will's remark, of course, was the issue of the war's possible geopolitical end-state, which is outside the scope of this paper.

Two notable predictions were made during this period, too, on the conduct of a ground campaign. Stephen Budiansky, a reporter for US News & World Report came uncomfortably close to the truth in a February 4 article titled "Preparing the Ground." Budiansky's attribution included

Gen. (Retired) Donn Starry, Marine Gen. (Retired) Bernard Trainor, Gen. Schwarzkopf, and "senior army officials." The prediction was neutralization of the ground threat by air strikes, after which coalition forces would attack the "heavily fortified defensive positions along the front," again with air power. The ground campaign would be an encirclement.

Plans call for flanking Iraqi positions in Kuwait to the west while simultaneously punching through at weak points and perhaps launching an amphibious landing to the east and helicopter-borne assaults to the rear.

The war, of course, with the exception of the amphibious assault, went exactly that way.

The other prediction was made by John M. Broder, for The Los Angeles Times, on February 17. With attribution to "Army officers," Broder outlined a main attack at night through Iraqi front-line defenses after a massive artillery preparation. The same air requirements, and amphibious assault scenario were included.

No other predictions were found that were as detailed or as close to the truth. Thus, the period during the air campaign, like the deployment phase, was almost disappointing from a research standpoint. Predictions all pointed to a ground war, but no one could say for certain when. Casualties were overestimated, but victory seemed certain. Other than Morgenthau's comment about VII Corps, which will be discussed in the next section, with the exception of Broder and Budiansky's articles, there was no effect these predictions could have had on military operations. As for the latter, they clearly cited

numerous military officials, both active and retired, for their information, yet the operation was still a tactical surprise.

## GROUND WAR

Most predictions regarding the conduct of a ground war had already been made prior to its beginning, and were discussed in the first two sections of this Chapter. Reporters, during the 100-hour flurry of activity, seemed happy to be reporting something new, and most articles during the period qualify more as "straight news" than predictive journalism.

Strikingly absent from newspapers were any predictions as to how long the ground war would last, or how high casualty figures would go. Instead, CENTCOM and Pentagon officials were quoted, and the questions were raised, but it almost appeared that, at least for a few days, a "wait-and-see" attitude existed for predictions. The most obvious reason, perhaps, was that reporters had only three days to really observe the facts, assemble their thoughts, and write a prediction that was automatically obsolete upon publication.

The Newsweek article by Morgenthau quoted in the previous section was the only clear reference I found intimating a massive deception plan for the attack, although others probably were published. That article raised the most serious concern about military operational security that I found while doing research.

It appears unlikely that the article caused serious damage, not only in light of the results, but because it was only one article in over 20 that I found that alluded to a massive shifting of units. Blackwell, as might be remembered from Chapter 1, wrote in Thunder in the Desert that he was aware units had moved, but did not mention the fact on CNN. That was most likely the case with most astute reporters; they may have guessed, but did not raise the issue publicly.

It is a disquieting thought that any of the hundreds of media in the desert keeping track of the missing units could ponder their whereabouts in print. The fact that those speculations would be buried in a deluge of other articles holds little comfort for the military practitioner. If Hussein had that information, and gave it any credence, the outcome in terms of casualties and duration of the ground war could have mirrored the most pessimistic predictions.

That observation does not presume to imply that military leaders would not be able to react to a breach in security; in this case one that would have seen Iraqi forces begin to shift west. The difficulty lies in the fact that what had been an option would no longer be available.

Army planners are taught that in order for a deception plan to work it must be believable. Looking at a map of Southwest Asia, and admitting that I am not as adept at strategic or tactical planning as CENTCOM, it still appears that there were few options available, given the terrain. If Hussein had shifted forces to Western Iraq from their reserve positions, he could have formed a credible defense east, south,

and west. The removal of an option would have been an unhappy constraint.

Those, then, are the general observations available after looking at predictive articles from August 2, 1990 to February 27, 1991. The gist is that the media did far more good for the military than harm, but the potential for disaster was certainly present. A more detailed discussion of the conclusions will take place in Chapter 6. What follows is a shift to content analysis to determine whether or not specific trends could be discovered.

#### CONTENT ANALYSIS

As detailed in Chapter 3, a word-count profile was done for 48 magazine articles, covering a span from August 20, 1990 to February 25, 1991. The number of articles per month were:

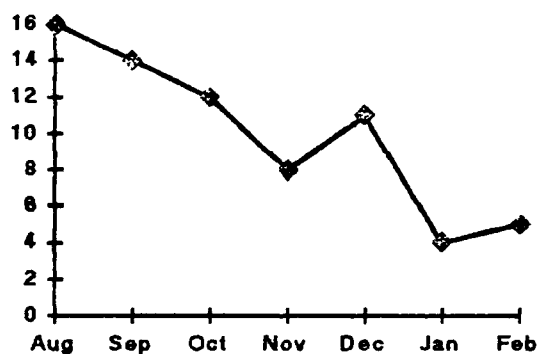
Aug 90	Sept 90	Oct 90	Nov 90	Dec 90	Jan 91	Feb 91
3	8	5	4	8	8	12

Nine base words were analyzed to determine whether or not predictions became more accurate over time.

It is important to remember that none of the articles analyzed were random — they were all selected for their predictive nature. For purposes of analysis it is unfortunate that an equal number of articles per month, each with an equal number of words, was not possible. However, when it becomes important to clearly show a trend, the word

count for a particular word is divided by the number of articles analyzed that month to more fairly distribute the results.

I selected the word "economic," which also became a category that included the words "sanction," "blockade," and "embargo" to vector. Figure 3 shows the usage frequency for this category, and clearly indicates a downward trend over time. When divided by the number of articles analyzed to average the data (Figure 4), the results are not only the same, but show a more uniform trend.



*Figure 3. "Economic" Word Count*

The indication is that, in predicting events, reporters concluded over time that sanctions either would not work or would not be used. A second review of the December 1990 articles, which showed a slight rise in category usage, revealed that, more often than not, the subject words in context indicated predicted failure of sanctions rather than success.

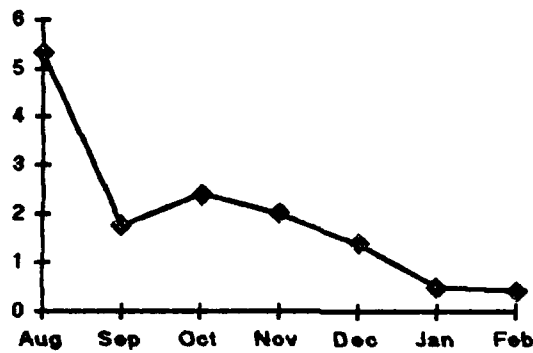


Figure 4. "Economic" Word Count (Averaged)

The trend becomes more dramatic when compared to the word "war," as shown at figure 5, below.

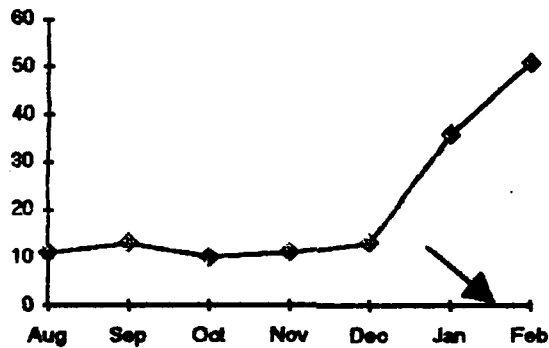


Figure 5. "War" Word Count

In this case, war did not become a category containing other words because of the multiplicity of meanings that could be derived from other like words. As an example, "fight" was considered but rejected when review indicated that "fight" can apply to the political sphere, battles over money, etc. Clearly, without an average necessary, "war" was an increasing trend, complimentary to "economic's" decline over time. An arrow was added to approximate the day the air campaign began, and



highlights the fact that the frequency rise of the word "war" seemed to appear well before the event.

As a further check, the word "military" showed the same trend (Figure 6). Again, there were no other words included to create a category. "Military" was selected as another likely alternative to "economic," to indicate whether or not journalists (again, in predictive articles only) were discussing embargoes or armies.

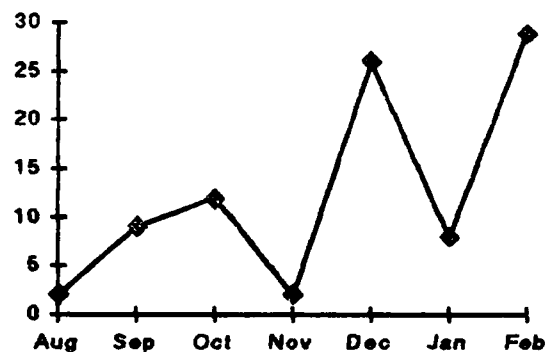


Figure 6. "Military" Word Count

An erratic trend is apparent in the "military" word count. One assumption might be that predictions became more numerous in December as hopes faded, but were then resurrected in February after the fighting started. The logical conclusion would then be that an alternative, such as "economic" would show a corresponding increase for the same period, which did not happen. More probably, "military" did not have as high a degree of association with the predictions made as other words may have, but it was not rejected for this study because there is still a clear increase in frequency prior to the outbreak of coalition hostilities.

Because of the disparity in vectors, some thought should be given to the general validity that a single word or words could indicate predictions of future events. There are admittedly numerous reasons a reporter might use the word "military," and never once predict its use. In fact, the opposite could be true: a journalist might write that the "military will *not* be used," resulting in a count of one. How then, can these single words indicate future events?

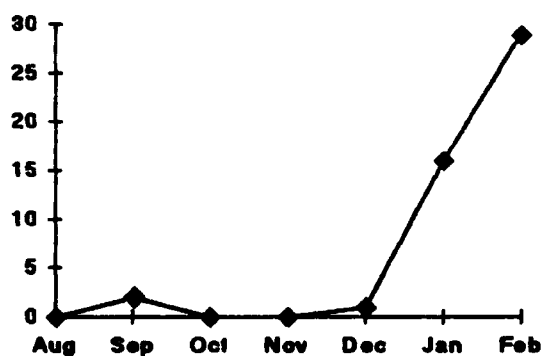


Figure 7. "Marine" Word Count

Contrast the first three words analyzed with the fourth, "marines," which was used as a control ("marines" became a category, including "leatherneck"). Although Marine expeditionary forces were deployed early in the conflict (the first Marine ship with pre-positioned equipment arrived in the Gulf region August 17), the word frequency in articles was almost non-existent until January 1990 (Figure 7, adjusted for the average in Figure 8).

The logic becomes clear in Figure 9, which profiles "amphibious," a word/category also containing "beachhead." Amphibious operations were

discussed as early as August as one way of entering Kuwait City, but the word usage did not become prevalent until late January, when Gen. Schwarzkopf began "feeding" the idea to the media as part of a deception plan. Amphibious assaults rapidly became popular predictions.

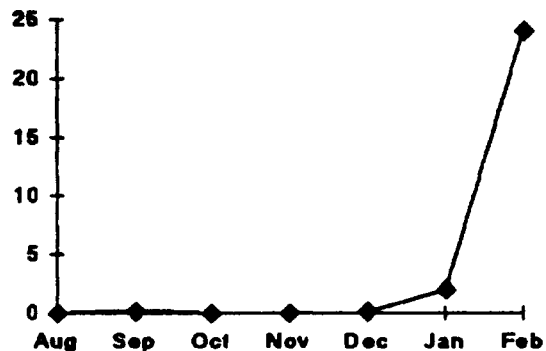


Figure 8. "Marine" Word Count (Averaged)

The inference is that words must be looked at in context, as in the first sections of this chapter, but they may also, in a general sense, "stand alone." A percentage of the times a word is used may be for some idea other than that which analysis is considering, but tends to balance out over a period of time and a number of articles.

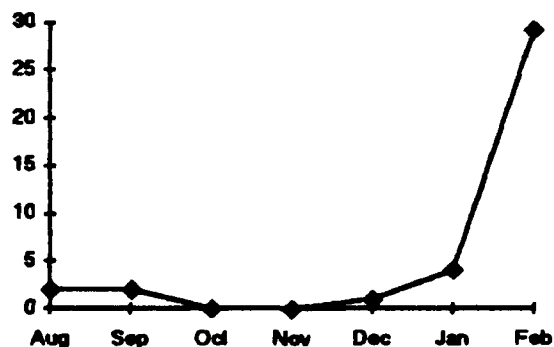


Figure 9. "Amphibious" Word Count

As a further example, it is interesting that, while working with raw profile summaries, I could routinely position them in time without looking at the article's date simply by looking at the flow of single words. Two examples are provided at Appendices A and B, so that the reader may experience the same phenomenon. In both examples only non-essential words were removed, leaving all descriptive words. Simply scan down the word lists taken from the first article. The flow tends to suggest that an invasion occurred recently, that a fear of military intervention exists, but that economic sanctions posed by a multinational coalition may or may not have an effect.

Compare that September 1990 list with the word profile at Appendix B. The trend in that January 1991 article is noticeably different, and much more militarily oriented. The obvious connection considering that both articles were written before a war started, is that there were enough "signals" given in the last quarter of 1990 for journalists to refocus their thinking and projections.

At that time all possible branches and sequels were theoretically still possible. Sanctions could still have worked, diplomatic pressure could have forced Hussein out of Kuwait, etc.

This process may not have held true if, for example, headline news articles had been scanned rather than articles that made predictions. Only a few samples could also skew the results; in catering to their readers, aviation magazines might tend to treat subjects differently than an economic magazine would. It was therefore necessary to search through a wide range and variety of magazines for predictive articles.

Finally, and most compelling, is historical perspective. Economic attempts to force Iraq into leaving Kuwait were not continued. Their word frequency of usage in predictive articles prior to any armed aggression, declined. Simply put, anything *could* have happened, but only one thing did, and was accurately vectored before the event.

With that fact established, we can look at the last, most controversial predictions. Given the likelihood of war, what was the probability, or number of predictions, of an air campaign, ground campaign, or both? Figures 10 and 11, compared and adjusted to the average per article in Figure 12, are fairly conclusive. Both words (neither of which became categories) show a dramatic rise, beginning in December, a minimum of 17 days before the air campaign started.

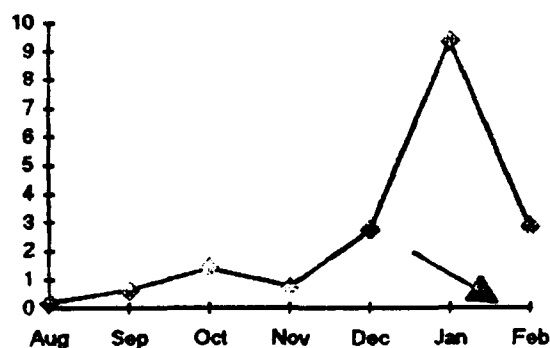


Figure 10. "Air" Word Count

At the risk of cluttering up the data, Figure 12 overlays the word profile (averaged) for "war." Without running a statistical analysis, the correlation appears to be good (statistical analysis will be discussed further in Chapter 6).

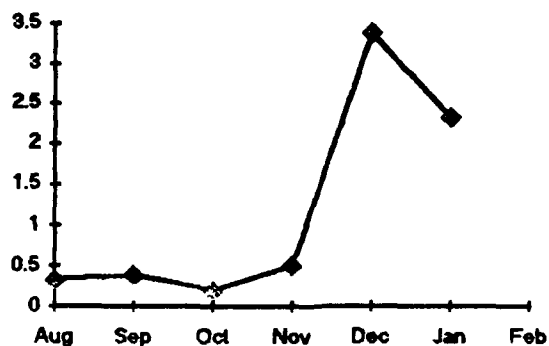


Figure 11. "Ground" Word Count

There is, however, indication that "war" and "ground" were not used in conjunction all the time, or else the numbers would parallel each other much more closely. This would be more of a problem for our analysis if "ground" had appeared much more frequently than "war," signifying some other connotation.

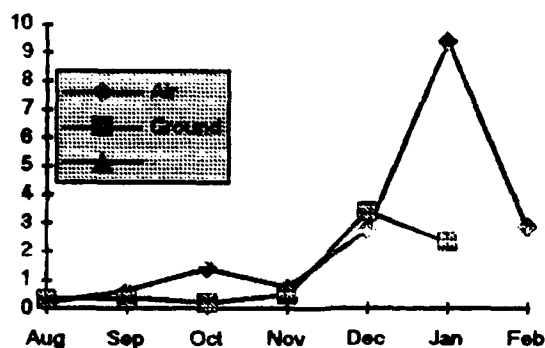


Figure 12. "Air" and "Ground" Comparison

Another question that arises when looking at the data in Figure 13 concerns timing. Were these articles written before or after the air campaign began?

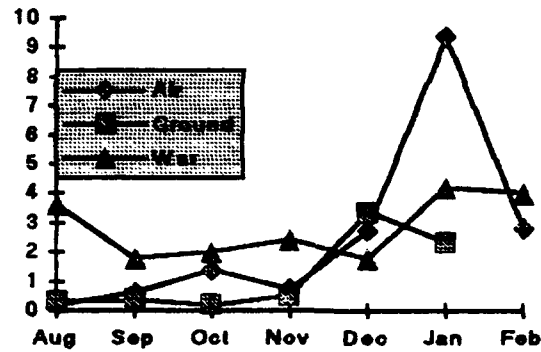


Figure 13. "Air," "Ground," "War" Comparison

If the word "air" only became popular after January 17, it is not predictive. Similarly, "ground" used after February 23 means very little. The graphs for those words (averaged) have been expanded to look at each article, positioned within its relative month, and are shown in Figures 14 and 15.

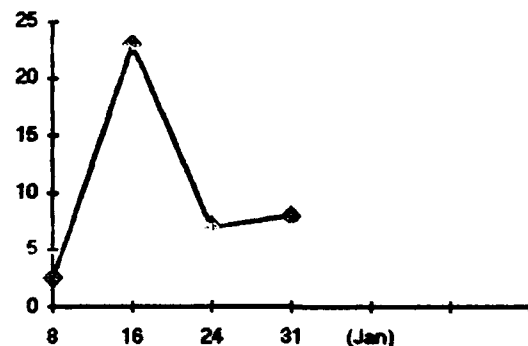


Figure 14. "Air" — A One-Month Look

One of the problems with the data compiled is that it was taken exclusively from magazines, as explained in Chapter 3. The issue date on a periodical is always different (later) than the date it was published, and has to be later than the date it was actually written.

Therefore, a magazine dated January 19, 1991 (a Tuesday), was assembled and printed sometime between January 13 and January 18 (with current satellite technology and regional publishing, in extreme circumstances it is possible to receive an article the night before it was published and have the magazine printed on time). In fact, the publication date is frequently as much as a week later than the actual issue date.

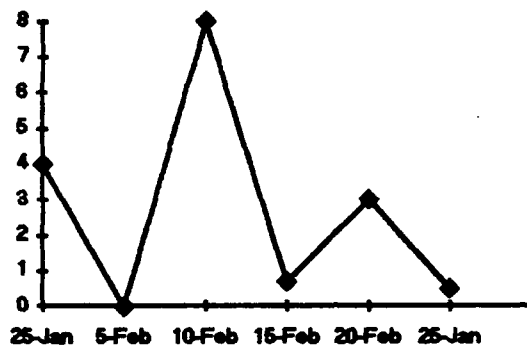


Figure 15. "Ground" — An Expanded View

Because the results generally show that frequency of the word "air" increased before the campaign was initiated, it was not necessary for development of this thesis to correspond with publishers or writers to determine the exact date the articles were written.

There is, however, a problem associated with the word profile for "ground," which, in an expanded view, actually shows a general decline over the period in question. The point should be remade that only eight predictive magazine articles were found that were written in January 1990, and 12 in February. Of those February articles, only one was



published before the 11th: a US News & World Report story titled "Preparing the Ground."

Obviously, such a scant amount of data does not lend itself to accurate analysis. A further attempt to find predictive articles for that period yielded no results and forced me to retain this outcome rather than use articles that were not in fact predictive.

While there is little or no scientific basis for believing that the vector would be positive had more predictive articles been found that month, because the general trend as indicated in Figure 11 was positive, I will assume that the argument set forth is still valid; as events unfolded, predictions became more accurate.

## CHAPTER 6

### CONCLUSIONS

Content analysis, and specifically word counts, yielded good results for this study. Some immediate concerns for application of this technique to ongoing events may already be apparent.

As a historical approach, with an understanding of what events took place, and when they happened, it was relatively easy to select the "right" words to count. That process might be much more difficult without "20/20 hindsight."

There is also no evidence that those trends would have continued if, for example, the air war was delayed two months, or only lasted a few days. In other words, we might speculate that the media needs a certain amount of time in order to gather the data necessary to make accurate predictions. Conversely, given too much time journalists could conceivably tire of the same predictions, resulting in a decreased word count.

Finally is the problem of specificity. If we assume for a moment that it is January 15, 1990, Figure 10, indicating an air campaign is probable, tells us almost nothing else. There is certainly no indication that air attacks would occur within the next 24 hours.

Ultimately, though, the analysis has merit. Sophisticated computer hardware or software was not necessary to compile the data in this thesis. No complex statistical equations were used to alter, analyze, or clarify the data.

While understanding the shortcomings, virtually anyone could collect and analyze data in a similar manner for ongoing events. Any number of words could be profiled initially, and narrowed as time went on to the few that indicated trends.

It would certainly be worthwhile to use a more complex analysis program to broaden the scope of articles processed and include more dynamics of content analysis, but for a layman to get a feel for general trends, this model appears to serve well. In any case, however, other historical events should be analyzed in the same manner to determine whether or not the same degree of success is achieved.

Early concerns that a measurable trend in predictive articles about the Gulf War might not be found, seems almost ludicrous in retrospect. The trend, after culling through literally hundreds of articles, leapt off the pages in a very clear signal.

The United States would stand for sanctions for a very brief period only, and that war, on a huge scale, would follow.

Certain defeat for Iraq was not just predicted, it shouted from almost every article. True, many reporters anticipated a blood bath for U.S. or coalition forces, a long and bloody battle, or a plea to consider other alternatives, but the message was clear; if Saddam

Hussein did not take immediate action to move Iraqi troops from Kuwait, dire consequences would be the inevitable result.

Indeed, many articles offered him exactly that kind of guidance. How to diplomatically obtain his objectives, how to retain or even improve his standing in the Arab world, and how in fact to defeat, or at least drive to a stalemate, U.S. or coalition forces.

There is usually an assumption that anyone who gains control of a nation must have some intelligence or ability at his or her disposal beyond that of the common citizen. That notion seems to belie Hussein's actions. He did not see the crisis develop, heed any advice given (at least in American newspapers and magazines), or, when confronted, use the power he had available to him in any rational manner.

That he did not perhaps underscores and adds weight to the idea that it is impossible for westerners to understand the Muslim mind. Also in light of the evidence, it would be to the military's disadvantage to underestimate the clarity and perception with which the media writes.

The media perceived the truth, and wrote it. That truth was not buried among tomes of trash, but was sent time and time again over a period of seven months. Some wrote that Hussein underestimated U.S. resolve or ability to act; yet the writing itself indicated that both were present, else how could they be underestimated?

The bottom line, then, in this thesis is that given an adversary who reads U.S. publications, the military must understand that we, as a nation, telegraph our intentions. Operational security and tactical

surprise are probably not at stake, but a wise enemy could find the chinks in our strategic armor.

#### SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This thesis asks far more questions than it answers. The conclusions and the scope of the study all seem tenuous at best for such a broad, contemporary subject. Two areas of further research come immediately to mind. The first deals with academic aspects and the second with military application.

As stated in Chapter 5, television was not included in analysis. To ignore such an important aspect of our lives does not do justice to the topic at hand. A further study, either including television news or consisting entirely of that medium, is necessary to fully examine predictive journalism.

It might prove worthwhile to look at only one publication or writer over time rather than a collection. After several studies, the idea that journalists' predictions are revised over time might be more firmly established or rejected.

The idea of applying content analysis to a sociological event to anticipate future events holds great interest for me. The application to military contingency planning, acting on possible branches or sequels, or simply preparing for the worst, holds endless possibilities. Research of this nature should be done in several ways.

Operations Just Cause and Urgent Fury can be analyzed as I have done to the Gulf War. Indeed, any conflict this century or last in

which U.S. media were present would provide an excellent source for study. Other, non-military historical events should be analyzed to determine whether or not a predictive trend was present.

Lastly, and most importantly, current events should be analyzed without the hindsight available to determine whether or not predictive trends become a reality. Should that happen, even a percentage of the time, this type of analysis might become a standard practice for the government, military, educational institutions, and business.

Militarily, a study should be done on the way media, both in the United States and in the Gulf region, were handled during Desert Storm. In this thesis, the number and variety of predictions as to when a ground war would start were, at best, confusing. If that confusion was designed by government and military personnel to mislead, it worked admirably and should be incorporated into future operations. The deception story outlining an amphibious assault had a similar result. Had I been Saddam Hussein, I would also have placed large forces near the shore in Kuwait City. While many reporters felt that deceiving them was inappropriate conduct, the results speak for themselves.

The article cited in Chapter 5 about Domino's Pizza deliveries could be the basis for additional study. The intent would be to find all instances during a period of recent history when information that could be detrimental to military operations was leaked inadvertently. Woodward, in The Commanders, mentioned that key Pentagon officials would park somewhere other than the Pentagon parking lot and then walk, rather than have their cars seen at odd hours. That same logic might apply to

other considerations, like pizza delivery, to enhance operational security.

It seems important that the issue of the "missing divisions" as Gen. Schwarzkopf moved them west for the attack receive further study. It was disappointing not to be able to review every article written, in every possible source, and every hour of television coverage during that period to find every reference that might have been made to those units.

Most of the U.S. goals and strategies were available for public consumption. Deadlines were given, policy was announced, and Iraq knew that the bombing would be severe and extended. That fact was borne out by the thousands of leaflets dropped over Iraqi troops telling them that they would be bombed, time and time again, until they surrendered or left Kuwait. The key, then, to the allied plan was tactical surprise achieved within a well-publicized strategy.

The massive shift of 150,000 soldiers in the VII Corps, XVIII Airborne Corps, 6th Armored Division (France), 101st Air Assault Division, and 3rd Armored Cavalry Regiment made tactical surprise with light casualties possible. A compromise of that plan, coupled with perhaps a more astute enemy commander, could have been devastating.

In a speech to the Command and General Staff College on March 20, 1992, Lt. Gen. William G. Pagonis, Commander of the 22nd Theater Area Army Command, said that virtually every enemy defensive position not on the Iraq-Kuwaiti border was facing east, toward a possible amphibious assault. The result, then, is that the media helped achieve tactical surprise. The recommendation, though, is that a study be done of the

military's ability to position units secretly in light of current technology available to the media. If I were an enemy of the United States, I would read their newspapers and magazines very carefully for the key to their plan.

Finally, a study might be conducted looking at the positive effects that journalism has had on military operations. For all the animosity and friction between the two institutions, they can be of great service to each other. In addition to the ground war and amphibious examples above, the media did an excellent job, for the most part, in conveying a competent, confident military organization.

The vast majority of predictions indicated U.S. victory, with cogent reasoning for that prediction. One wonders, if a similar situation were to occur and U.S. resolve were not in question, if the belligerent might not respond more readily to diplomatic overtures.



## APPENDIX A

Word count profile taken from David A. Brown's article "Armed Struggle Seems Inevitable In Complex Middle Eastern Situation," appearing on page 47 of the September 10, 1990 issue of Aviation Week & Space Technology.

action	1	israel	1
alternatives	1	israeli	1
arm	1	israelis	1
armaments	1	jewish	1
armed	1	kuwait	1
army	1	leave	1
attack	1	limited	1
attacks	1	logical	1
aviation	1	military	1
battle	1	million	1
billion	1	miracle	1
bleak	1	multinational	1
blocks	2	nation	1
chemical	1	nations	1
confrontation	1	nonviolent	1
crisis	1	offensive	1
defeat	1	officer	1
defeated	1	oil	1
destroy	1	oil-producing	1
economic	1	oil-rich	1
fight	1	oppose	1
flanks	1	opposing	1
forces	1	outlast	1
forward	1	paralyzed	1
ground	1	persian	1
hope	1	petroleum	1
hussein	1	power	1
hussein's	1	provokes	1
ignorant	1	reason	1
imminent	1	reserves	1
invasion	1	response	1
invest	1	saddam	1
invested	1	saudi	1
involved	1	seized	1
iraq	1	seizing	1
iraqi	1	sentiment	1
iraqis	1	settlement	1
situation	1	trigger	1
soviet	1	united	1
struggle	1	unlike	1
support	1	wait	1
supporting	1	wanted	1
tech	1	war	1

technologically	1	weaponry	1
temporary	1	weapons-nuclear	1
territory	1	world	1
threat	1	world's	1
threats	1	would	1
thrust	1	years	1

## APPENDIX B

Word count profile taken from "Unleashing Desert Storm," appearing on page 19 of the January 19, 1991 issue of The Economist (Middle East correspondents).

air	1	fortified	1
airborne	1	frontal	1
aircraft	1	ground	1
airmen	1	ground-hugging	1
american	1	ground-to-ground	1
americans	1	guard	1
amphibious	1	gulf	1
armoured	1	helicopter	1
army	1	helicoptered	1
artillery	1	helicopters	1
assault	1	hussein	1
assaults	1	hussein's	1
attack	1	invasion	1
attacking	1	israel	1
attacks	1	kill	1
b-52s	1	land	1
battles	1	landing	1
bomb	1	landings	1
bombers	1	launchers	1
bombs	1	liberate	1
casualties	1	logistics	1
chemical	1	marine	1
chemical-weapons	1	marines	1
close	1	mechanised	1
coast	1	military	1
collapse	1	missiles	1
combat	1	months	1
conquer	1	offensive	1
counter-attack	2	operation	1
defend	1	outflank	1
defended	1	sorties	1
defenders	1	targets	1
destroy	1	troops	1
destroyed	1	vehicles	1
fight	1	victory	1
fighter	1	vietnam	1
fighter-bombers	1	war	1

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